



# El Agricultor Latino

Farmworkers to Farm Owners  
Center for Latino Farmers - Yakima, WA

## Summer 2014

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## Message from the President

Happy Summer Season! It was 106 degrees today in Yakima, WA, but it is also the best time of the year, as the harvest season is upon us. Farmers are consumed with either harvesting or preparing for harvest.

The Center continues to hear Latino farmers complain about farm worker shortage and the need to legalize those worker here. Finding and keeping farm workers continue to be a struggle for farm owners, but the silver lining is that farmworkers can negotiate higher wages. Small farms tend to struggle the most, since corporate farms tend to pay higher wages for longer terms, versus the small farms that only need workers for shorter periods. Loyalty of farmworkers has become very important to the farm owner. The money is flowing in the rural communities, so if farm workers are working they are happy, the rural small businesses are equally happy in that the farmworkers tend to buy locally!!!

Immigration reform continues to be a constant area of discussion within the farmers and farm worker community that contact the Center. In early July, State Senator Patty Murray had a press conference in Yakima and urged bipartisanship within the House of Representatives. "We (Senate) did it...by focusing on what we all agreed on: that both families and businesses simply cannot continue with a broken system." House Speaker John Boehner told President Obama that he would not bring the Immigration bill up for a vote. Mike Gempler, director of WA Growers League said, "...immigration reform continues to be a top concern for growers." (Yak Herald 7/2/14)

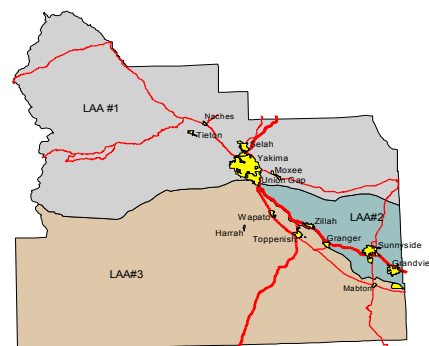
The Center continues to serve in a leadership position in regard to Latino producers in WA State and the USA. The Center Stakeholders Advisory has been involved in directing the focus of future grant applications which will be discussed on the next newsletter. We continue to work in partnership with USDA agencies, WSDA agencies, and Ag industry partners such as Holtziner Fruit, Cowiche Growers, BSI Group, WA St Conservation Com, topics of concern are food safety, conservation, renewable energy, succession planning, computer literacy and cooperative development.

How can a CEO go wrong with a great hardworking team of Maria DJ Rodriguez, Maria Giedra, and Veronica Castaneda? They are in constant communication with the growers and know the needs in order to provide the services needed. "The Center helps the producers succeed and their success is our success! - Luz Bazan Gutierrez

## Deadline! Nominate County Committee

County Committee plays a huge role in implementing FSA programs in the area they serve. FSA encourages all producers to nominate themselves, or another producer to run for this position. You need to be registered with FSA to qualify. This year, the producer has to reside within the Local Administrative Area (LAA) #2, to be nominated and only producers that reside in the area are able to vote. (Blue area in the map) For more info visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/elections](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections).

<b>June 15</b>	<b>Nomination period begins</b>
<b>Aug 1</b>	<b>Last day for nominations</b>
<b>Nov 3</b>	<b>Ballots mailed to voters</b>
<b>Dec 1</b>	<b>Last day to return ballots at USDA</b>



Current members: Elected: Brad Bonny-Chair, Mark Barrett-Vice Chair, Steve Isaac-member, Appointed: Carol Hull-Advisor & Sergio Marquez- Advisor. Newly elected members take office January 1, 2015.

## Bumper Cherry Crop for 2014

WA cherry growers are closing out a record breaking year. The cherry season pinch seems to be very favorable despite their arrival of seven days earlier than originally planned. The cherry growers are expecting a large but not a record-breaking crop this year.

The Northwest Cherry Growers trade association said its first crop estimate of the year, calling for just fewer than 20 million 20-pound boxes. A warm spring after only moderate winter frost damage has left trees with well-spaced blooms, meaning the cherries can grow into large, marketable fruit. The estimate would put this year's crop roughly 40 percent higher than last year's rain-drenched 14.3 million boxes. The expected harvest began in early June and will run all the way till mid August; however, anything can happen.

Last year, growers estimated 18 million boxes in May, only to see rain through most of June and some of July cut that way back.



## Compensation Claims Updates

On March 2011, USDA Sec Tom Vilsack sent out a letter to all stakeholders saying, "... USDA is working with colleagues at the Dept of Justice to launch a process to bring resolution for those that allege they were discriminated against by USDA between 1981-2000." He went on to say, "Today, we are providing these individuals with a simpler path to justice by filing a claim of compensation."

In 2012, USDA announced that claims would be accepted from 9/24/12 through 3/25/13 with a website [www.farmerclaims.gov](http://www.farmerclaims.gov) or call 1-888-508-4429 Mon thru Fri 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST. The claims process was being administered by a third party/independent legal service company. The form included options for Tier 1(a), 1(b), & Tier 2. On 3/25/13 Sec Vilsack announced an extension for submission of claims to 5/1/2013. In WA State the Center provided tech assist to approximately 25 claimants & all were submitted on a timely basis.

Fast forward to 2014! In May a call was received saying that any denial letters would be sent out in June, with no appeal process. That was the last communication. Today 7/17/14, a call was made to the 1-888 508-4429 & a person named Bryan finally answered and gave us the following information; "Worse case scenario, deadline for Tier 1(a) will be summer of 2014; deadline for Tier 1(b) & Tier 2 will be late summer or early winter of 2014.

The Center served as an intermediary helping prepare claims; however, the Center does not have any influence on the claim decision. For more info, claimants need to call 1-888-508-4429.

## H-2A Program Opp If Workers Not Available

The H-2A program benefits the farmer, but can only be used if the farmers cannot find locals willing to work. The H-2A program brings temporary workers from other countries under a temporary visa. The paperwork can be very long and complicated and the process of applying for the H-2A program can be lengthy, not to mention ensuring all guidelines are being met. Most farmers find it too time consuming and possibly confusing. The WA State Farm Bureau saw an opportunity and started the WA Farm Labor Association, (WAFLA). Director Dan Fazio said, "WAFLA has devised a turnkey program where it handles all the arrangements, does all the complex paperwork, makes all the various payments, charts the bus to deliver workers to the farm, and charges the farmer a single fee, which usually amounts to about \$1,200 to \$1,300 per person." (Good Fruit Grower, May 1, 2014)

The Center has Latino farmers who have spoken up about not having enough farmworkers. Manuel Herrera, a Wapato farmer said, "I would like to see more help for small farmers like me. I am having a hard time finding farm workers. I am in the middle of thinning & I have all my family doing the thinning."

## Climate Change Stressing Soil?

The climate really is one of the biggest challenges that farmers face. It could mean a good or bad crop year for the farmer. An article titled, **Climate Change Stressing Soil**, focused around **soil conservation**. You need to have good soil to plant and grow your crops to get the best production. All it takes is practicing good soil conservation practices. There is focus on how the climate change will affect agriculture, which could mean longer growing seasons for some.

The report also highlighted the protection of land and water resources. There are studies being done to focus more on productivity of our nation's food supply. The Center has focused on helping beginning farmers and ranchers with bringing them more educational workshops that will teach conservation techniques that will help them continue to be as providers for our nation's food supply. There is more information on this topic link provided. [www.globalchange.gov](http://www.globalchange.gov)

## USDA-FSA Loan Interest Rates Effective as of July 1, 2014

Program	Interest Rates
Farm Operating-Direct	2.125%
Farm Ownership- Direct	3.875%
Farm Ownership- Direct, Joint Financing	2.50%
Farm Ownership- Down Payment	1.50%
Emergency Loan- Amount of Actual Loss	3.125%
Conservation Loan	3.875%

## Preventing Pesticide Violations

According to WSDA's Pesticide Management Division, they received 150 complaints regarding alleged violations of the state's pesticide laws, as of this year. Half of those complaints involved allegations that pesticides being applied in agriculture settings had drifted onto the neighbor's property.' (Yakima Valley Business Times) WSDA points out that if applicators follow a few safety rules this would lessen the risk:

**Read the label-**gives the necessary precautions to follow, and what to wear etc.;

**Be diligent-** be cognizant of their surrounding which can include homes nearby;

**Properly calibrate equipment-** check what equipment you will need to do the job right;

**Scout around-** know your surroundings, check around, and walk around to make sure it is safe;

**Evaluate-** check the conditions: Is it too windy, is the temperature right?;

**Halt-** an applicator should check for any changes in the weather that can cause drifts, or be alert to anyone approaching the area that is not wearing protective gear;

Another very important rule that our clients learned during the pesticide safety class was to wash their clothing separate from other clothes, to prevent cross contamination with their families clothing.

The Center has a tentative date for pesticide training in late October. Call 509-453-3157 to register.



## Refund for Noninsured Crop Disaster Assist Program (NAP)

If you are a beginning farmer and rancher and you paid the 2014 Crop insurance service fees for NAP coverage, you are entitled to a refund. The fee has been waived by the Farm Bill of 2014.

For more info you may call your local USDA-FSA service center or the Center at 509-453-3157.

### When seeking assistance from USDA agencies

**"It is Mandatory that they provide a Receipt of Service!"**

## Farm land for Sale, not so fast!

The value of land in Eastern WA continues to rise. More and more farmers are holding onto their land. This is not good news for our Latino farmers. Manuel Ramirez one of the Center clients said, "I have been looking for property for almost two years and there really isn't much out there. Those that are available seem to be overpriced or not enough water."

The Yakima County assessor Dave Cook agrees, "Agriculture is really strong right now." Numbers speak for themselves. Wally Morrison lead agricultural appraiser for the assessor's office in Yakima County mentioned, "The average sale price per acre for irrigated, high-quality, vacant farmland rose 37 percent to an estimated \$5,302 between 2011 and 2014." (Yakima Herald)

The Center staff stated, "We have qualified buyers that are ready to purchase some land." Call 509-453-3157 if you would like to sell your land to a hard working Latino farmer that wants to keep the land in agriculture.

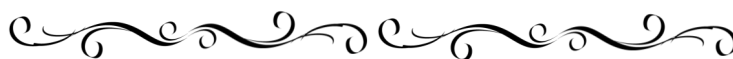
## Free Deep Soil Sampling Program

The Lower Valley Groundwater Advisory Committee (GWAC) in partnership with the South Yak Con District is offering a free deep soil sampling program in the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area. The sampling is scheduled to take place in the September/October period after harvest. In a nutshell the group is providing this service to help the producers get an evaluation of their soil.

This evaluation will let a farmer know about the vitality of their soil. The article stated, "Deep soil testing will be performed to determine the extent of travel of nitrates below the root zone and into the groundwater." There will be a questionnaire that the growers are encouraged to fill out before testing. Laurie Crowe, District Coordinator said, "One of the many benefits to getting your soil tested is that a landowner may want to know if his/her samples are showing if their soil has a high level of nitrates, which is bad for ground water."

The Center received a call from Mr. Santos a current client wanting to know where he could get his soil tested, because he wants to transition to organic & soil sampling was required as part of the application process.

Ms. Crowe said that the information about this sampling was sent out to all their irrigation users in the Sunnyside Valley and part of the Roza irrigation districts. To view map of areas you can access, [www.yakimacounty.us/gwma](http://www.yakimacounty.us/gwma) If you are interested call the South Yakima Conservation District 509-829-9025.





Development Resources

**Center for Latino  
Farmers**


P.O. Box 9492  
Yakima, WA 98909  
509-453-3157

## **Tomas Villanueva, Presente!!! 1942-2014**

From the state capitol to orchards in Central WA, Mr. Villanueva played a key role in improving working conditions for farm workers, advocating for minimum wage and health-care standards, improving farm worker housing, in the days they camped unsheltered on the banks of the Columbia River. Former Gov. Mike Lowry, who worked with Mr. Villanueva on farm worker-housing issues as a congressman in the 1980s and during his time as governor (1993-97), said "Mr. Villanueva was informed and passionate but also had a way of easing politicians into seeing the farm worker side of things." "Amigo Tomas, que en paz descansas", Luz Bazan Gutierrez.



### **Monthly Radio Program**

Month	Day	Time
July	Thurs 24	4 - 5 p.m. 
Aug	Thurs 21	
Sept	Thurs 18	

## **FSA Certified Borrower Fin Mgt Training in August**

The Center will be conducting a 20 hour intense Fin Mat Series in Spanish for new & beginning farmers.

**Date: August 4, 5, 6 & 7, 2014 (evenings)**

**Time: 5:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.**

**Place: 22 S 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue in Yakima**

The subjects will focus around understanding credit, financial statements-profit & loss & balance sheets, equity assessments, setting up filing system, manual versus computerized accounting, etc. This series is a requirement for new and beginning farmers & ranchers that obtain an FSA loan. The series is held at least twice a year in both Yakima & Wenatchee. The cost for the workshop is \$100 per person, plus \$50 for spouse.

Space is limited to 15 persons and pre-registration is required.

"This project was supported by the Beginning Farmer & Rancher Dev Prog of the National Institute of Food & Ag, USDA, Grant # 2012-49400-19670. To find more resources & programs for beginning farmers & ranchers visit [www.Start2Farm.gov](http://www.Start2Farm.gov), a component of the Beg Farmer & Rancher Dev Prog

